

*Confidential*

## URBAN GOALS AND POLICY DIRECTIONS

### Goal 4

Building bridges of communication and understanding across racial, class and jurisdictional lines that now divide urban communities, with a view to progressive development, in each urban or metropolitan region of consensus, and a power to act in terms of common interest and purpose.

Each urban community must assume primary responsibility for the quality of life and range of opportunities that it will offer to future citizens. Over-all growth rates and certain aspects of the "American standard of living" will depend on national economic and technological trends. These trends, and national policies related to them, will also affect, differently for different communities, the location and nature of major employment and recreational opportunities and the migration and mixing of people. Within this context, however, the question of whether or not most of our urban communities are to be aesthetically pleasing, economically efficient and generally satisfying to all citizens will depend upon thought and action within those communities themselves.

### The Nature of the Problem

The central problem derives from the complex fractionization of urban communities, physically and institutionally. Our governmental and ideological systems simply were not prepared to deal rationally and constructively with the 20th century technological and population explosions. We have inherited a system of local



government that divides most sizeable urban or metropolitan communities among scores or hundreds of disparate jurisdictions, separated by boundaries that cut across natural or inevitable lines of development and cut up service areas into inconvenient, inefficient units. We have a financial system, public and private, and an automotive transportation system that favor more or less haphazard location and relocation of the more affluent citizens and of many business and industrial activities on the expanding periphery of urban areas at the expense of orderly renewal of obsolescent plant and infrastructure in the older centers, and orderly development outside them. Hence, the increasing segregation heretofore noted, of the poor, and the underprivileged, especially those who are "non-white," in the declining areas of the older cities and earlier suburbs. Thus, the areas most in need of heavy investment of money, energy and leadership, if we are to maintain our central cities as vital centers of culture, commerce and residence, find themselves increasingly unable to muster the resources even to stem the process of decay.

Efforts in behalf of the larger national system to make up for some of these lacks tend to be frustrated by two basic factors: (1) an ideological adherence to notions of "local" responsibility that fail to recognize that what was once an effective local community is now, for many vital purposes, but a part of a larger urban community; and (2) the natural self-protective tendencies of individuals, families and organizations that feel they have "escaped" from or avoided the hazards of "the city"



and are thereafter concerned mainly with protecting their "way of life" in their present location. The protective urge is especially strong in middle-class families with children whom they quite understandably do not wish to subject to a substandard school or a worrisome neighborhood.

Particular efforts to raise the standards of depressed elements in urban communities so far made through national programs in housing, urban renewal and the expanded educational, welfare and employment programs growing out of the civil rights and anti-poverty movements have also been largely frustrated by a number of factors, including: (1) lateness and inadequacy of commitment; (2) failure to recognize the extent of our ignorance of how to bring about the changes in the conditions, attitudes and performance of people on both sides of the opportunity gap needed to enable all Americans to become effective participants in the support and enjoyment of the good urban life; (3) the unreadiness of our local institutions suddenly to play the new innovative and collaborative roles demanded by many of the programs; (4) the separatism and antagonisms among the institutions, professional and functional, public and private, through which we have been accustomed to deal with various human and community problems and needs.

The third point will stand some elaboration. Historically, it has seemed natural to deal with human or community needs or problems as they were perceived by creating a new or expanded "service" or program. Thus we have had an accumulation of programs and program agencies, supported by especially interested groups and staffed by increasingly self-conscious and self-assertive professional or semi-professional groups or guilds.



Education, welfare, health, mental health, corrections, recreation and other broad categories are not only held distinct from one another, but are subdivided into specialties that tend to be reflected in separate public or private agencies, each seeking to "do good" by meeting a limited or segmented need of an individual, or, perhaps, of a family or community. At the same time, other program agencies staffed by other professionals -- highway engineers, water engineers, sanitary engineers, development planners, etc., -- are planning and building physical facilities that profoundly affect the structure and viability of the community, often with blithe if not boasted disregard of social, aesthetic or over-all economic consequences. We have only recently begun to recognize that these separate ministrations to individual and community needs do not necessarily add up to the best **possible attack on the complex problems of an under-**educated, unhealthy, disheartened individual; or of a multi-problem family; or of a neighborhood or a city suffering from serious physical and social decay.

We do not believe that any of these conditions that have frustrated or grievously limited the effectiveness of national efforts at improving the physical and social contours of urban America can be dealt with successfully without the deep and creative involvement of the communities themselves, where the action occurs and success or failure is revealed. Perceptions and goals must be clarified, outmoded notions discarded, determination developed, efforts coordinated and focussed, experiments devised and carried out, old institutions and practices restructured and people engaged at the community level if the dream of a happy



truly prosperous and innately just urban America is to be realized. These things can not be done by fiat from above, nor can they be fully accomplished by a single community acting in isolation.

The fractionization and confusion of areas, populations, institutions, purposes, and efforts at amelioration within any urban community calls for a massive development in communication and understanding across old divisions and antagonisms if the community is to exercise effective responsibility for its own destiny and therefore for its share in building the kind of urban America of which the genius of man, properly directed, is surely capable. Happily, we are not without experience and some evolving guidelines for constructing more effective communications and developing that sense of the metropolitan community required to sustain public and private action conducive to the general good. To adapt a phrase from Luther Gulick, we must and we can meld from the diverse constituencies within an urban region a metropolitan constituency capable of expressing in an authoritative fashion the common interest and formulating the broad lines of action required to serve it.

#### Conditions for Success

Before considering possible ways to organize the search for consensus in a total urban community, it is well to be clear about certain essential conditions for success. We have had enough experience to know that we cannot produce the viable metropolitan community by incantation or simply by devising a logical structure for metropolitan government. The political, personal and other interests and emotions, which are, indeed,



interests, vested in things as they are will surely defeat any model scheme unless at least four essential conditions are met.

First, the responsibility imposed upon any part of the system must be matched and supported by resources, including personal and institutional capability, money and reach or jurisdiction, commensurate with the scope of the problem. We must not, then, expect a central city with declining tax resources to support the mounting costs of education, welfare and other services that are, in any event, the result of regional and national forces. Equally important, we cannot expect an impoverished human environment, unaided, to muster the leadership and other special skills and knowledge required to resolve some of the toughest problems a society has ever faced. Neither can we expect an area, just because it happens to be called a municipal corporation, to rehouse all its slum dwellers and at the same time attract middle income families and fine new business and cultural facilities on an inadequate land base. Nor can we expect an undeveloped municipality that is in tax competition with its neighbors to make land use decisions that are costly to itself just because they might promote more orderly metropolitan development. Finally, we must be prepared to face the need for reorganizing governmental and private agencies that do not have a structure or tradition conducive to responsible participation in the affairs of the metropolitan community.

Second, in seeking the long-run well-being of the community as a whole, it is necessary to avoid serious threat to the substantial immediate interests of individuals and families. In general, the people who feel that they have the most to protect may not be able to prevent disaster to the community resulting



from inaction, but they commonly are in a position to veto or delay positive action that they feel to be inimical to them. In this connection, it is necessary to reflect that people know they are not immortal, and know, too, that certain basic family needs, e.g. education of children, are of much shorter duration than a single life span. Therefore, it is not surprising that many good citizens are much more concerned about the condition of their segment of the community during the next ten years than about the condition of the whole community in the year 2000, or even in 1980. The fact, of course, is that we cannot produce the better city of tomorrow by seriously debasing its value for any of its members. If we are to enroll people from all segments of the community as active metropolitan citizens, we must find a way to show that costs and benefits will be distributed fairly, in a manner that will not impose unreasonable hardship on any segment. This rule, as has been amply demonstrated in urban renewal areas, is just as necessary to get the cooperation of the poor as it is to secure the support of the more affluent.

Third, it is necessary at all times to see the development of any urban community in the context of state and national development and urban policies and to recognize the constant presence of state and nation in the community. We live, conduct government and carry on business in the community, but much of the living of increasing numbers of us is outside the community and much of the government and business within the community has a base much broader than that of the community. Consequently, any strategy for developing consensus and corresponding action within the community must involve extension of communication lines in many directions outside, with a view to relating



local action to the well springs and main currents of the national life. It is partly in its responses to this imperative and its use of the resources of the larger system that the local community can find ways to meet the first and second conditions described above. We all have multiple citizenship -- local, state, national. Sometimes these citizenship roles are exercised as if they were unrelated, if not actually at cross purposes. Wise use of multiple citizenship can make it easier to meet both the long-run needs of urban communities and the short-run interests of individuals. This is possible through the system of partnership federalism that is emerging in place of the arms length dealings that have tended to characterize inter-level relationships in the past.

Fourth, leadership is of the essence. Excellence in the urban environment does not come by happenstance. It can result only from goals specifically articulated and consciously pursued through both public and private policy. Leadership is the key, for goals do not spring forward spontaneously, nor does community interest and support emerge without stimulation. Goals must be projected by active community leadership, discussed, fought over, and adopted by the public and private agencies in the community whose policies will shape the community's development. Political leaders usually can see little or no profit in the kind of pioneering required for goal formulation and implementation. Planning and other technical agencies can offer suggestions and technical data, but they cannot furnish the community consensus required for goals to be meaningful.



The obligation and the opportunity of business leadership in this matter are as tightly related to each other as two sides of the same coin. The obligation rests mainly on the long-range necessities of business itself. It is, of course, reinforced by the moral consideration that calls on human beings in all their dealings to seek to elevate, not to destroy or demean one another. The opportunity lies in some of the special characteristics of modern business that qualify it for metropolitan leadership.

Business decisions have much to do with the way in which urban communities develop and change. These decisions are heavily conditioned by the structure and policies of government, but the decisions are crucial. Too often, they fail to take account of their own power to influence other elements of the system by selecting from alternatives the one most conducive to the more rational development of the community and consequently to the long-run improvement of the base for doing business. It is no longer possible, if it ever was, for American business to call on the political community to provide a good "business climate" and to go shopping around for the best deal. To a very large extent the business climate of the future is being made by business decisions today. The unsavory conditions in our urban communities, including misery and decay at the center and haphazard, unsightly and inherently inefficient development around the edges, are a threat to the soundness, security and prosperity of the whole American system and hence to the business sector of that system. In the immediate present, this threat



shows up in such drags on business as inadequate water supply and transportation; a mismatch between jobs offered and skills available in the market; environmental conditions that are unsatisfactory to employees and their families; and loss of potential markets due to the inability of millions of Americans to participate in the benefits of the affluent society surrounding them. Investment of money and talent in preserving and strengthening the community base on which business, like all other institutions rests, is as necessary an investment as that in plant, equipment and R&D.

This obligation of business is made more binding by opportunity, by the fact that business can do something about it, a great deal more, in general, than it has been doing. In the first place, it is much easier for business leadership, especially that of large-scale business, to take the broad and the long view than for political leadership. It is not so cramped by the geographical imperative created for government by local and state boundaries. Its time horizon is not so cluttered by the succession of frequent elections by which politicians must order their lives. Its use of men and money to meet changing conditions is more flexible than that of governments encased in civil service and budgetary and other fiscal rules and procedures enforced by law. And whereas innovation is often a dangerous game for a politician, it has come to be recognized as essential to a dynamic business. By bringing these perspectives and capacities to bear on the development of goals and programs conceived in fairly long-range, community-wide terms, business leadership can help political leadership overcome some of the inhibitions under



which it operates. It can, in short, help make such thinking and actions safer and more fashionable.

In too many situations, the tendency of businessmen to think of themselves as proper conservatives leads them to join in resistance to changes in the public arena that they would take for granted as necessary in their own. This is partly a function of their own lack of comfortable sophistication in public affairs and points to the fact that a basic obligation of business leaders, as of all other citizens, is to become educated on the facts of community life. Fortunately, the business community has much to contribute to its self-education and to that of others. In the first place, business generates and lives by a vast amount of factual information that, if put together properly and made available, would throw a great deal of light on the economic and social health, prospects and problems of the community as a whole. In the second place, business and government are becoming involved in an increasing number of partnership arrangements that are bringing many business, government and community leaders into close working relationships that are breaking down old barriers to communication and understanding. Thus business is developing a cadre of its own people with experience that can contribute to its own and the public understanding of community problems. Business can make a great contribution simply by putting these resources of information and experience to work in the purposeful search for community consensus and identity.

There is one two-edged problem resulting from the structure of modern business that needs to be faced in providing effective



community leadership. This is the problem of the continuity and strength of local commitment. Many of the biggest and most powerful enterprises in most metropolitan communities are not local, but national concerns, with headquarters in another city. Moreover, the mobility of top and middle management is such that a man who has just established himself as a strong leader in one community may find himself moving suddenly to another. These conditions too often lead to an abdication of local responsibility for anything but pro forma support for "good" community causes by persons and organizations representing very large fractions of the economic base. There is no one answer to this problem, but it cannot be said too emphatically that it should be firm policy of national corporations to assume, through competent local representatives, at least as great a responsibility for community affairs as an operation of the same size that was locally owned and run might assume. It is no accident that business leadership has often been most constructive in communities where the principal industries were owned and run by people who identified personally with the community. Absent such a policy operating in most communities, American industry will inevitably contribute to the continuing decay of urban communities, the decline of local initiative and responsibility, the nationalization of decision-making and the erosion of democratic and human values.

One word of caution. Business leadership is not enough. Metropolitan leadership, to be effective, must be acceptable and have ready access to all parts of the community. It must, therefore, involve people, from all sectors, horizontally and



vertically. This means that it is often necessary to discover some persons who are little known but who for some reason are attuned to and have the confidence of segments of the community that are not related to established community organizations and institutions. But business leadership can be the beginning and it can provide substantial continuing logistical and moral support for a broad based metropolitan leadership. The way to begin is simply to seek out and enlist an ever widening circle of partners in the enterprise.

Concerned business leadership can draw on experience in many parts of the country to put together a formidable battery of techniques for involving community organizations, governmental leaders and citizens at large in the search for consensus and a will to act in metropolitan terms.

1. In many communities, the first step might be the establishment of a metropolitan goals commission.

Volunteer citizens goals commissions have been organized in a number of cities including Dallas, Tucson, Minneapolis-St. Paul and Los Angeles. Such commissions must involve representatives of all sectors of the community in exploring the community and hammering out its aspirations. A community not ready to organize a cross-section commission may be led toward it by having two or more appropriate organizations sponsor a seminar on community issues and problems. The Brookings Institution has conducted dozens of such seminars around the country. In other cities or metropolitan areas, universities have performed the function



of the Brookings Institution in organizing and staffing seminars extending over a period of months and involving leadership from all segments of the community.

2. A second technique, then, is what has been described in some areas as the urban issues seminar.

Such seminars may, as has been suggested, be used to prepare the ground for a formal metropolitan goals commission. Where it is possible to organize a commission before such a seminar is held, the conduct of an urban issues seminar may well be the first step in the work of the commission. It has the advantage of getting people acquainted in a somewhat relaxed situation and involving them in an increasingly informed dialogue on community problems and issues before it is necessary for them to feel that they must begin to make decisions. Since goal formulation and the development of policy to meet goals is a continuing business in a changing society, seminars involving different mixes of people and focusing on strategic problems can be an extremely useful device on a continuing basis.

3. Each metropolitan area should encourage and assist local colleges and universities in developing a capacity to contribute to expanding knowledge of the area, to train people for professional and semi-professional service in dealing with local problems and to educate through various forms of extension the general public on those problems.



In the last eight years an increasing number of so-called urban studies centers or institutes have been established in public and private universities around the country. In some cases these organizations have taken the initiative in instituting seminars and other programs that have alerted and interested business and community leadership in taking action. In others, business and community leadership groups have called upon the university for assistance. The Boston College seminars conducted over a period of years on the initiative of the College itself have rightly been given credit for the development of a stronger sense of metropolitan community in the Boston area. In Pittsburgh, on the other hand, Action-Housing, Inc., a non-profit corporation, has enlisted the help of local colleges and universities and the state university in a variety of helping roles.

4. Every metropolitan community should have a broadly based metropolitan citizens planning and development agency.

The New York metropolitan region has had an agency for more than forty years in the Regional Plan Association. This association has in the last two or three years been playing the role of a metropolitan goals commission. It conducted a series of seminars on goals for the region involving the use of television, as a part of the background for the development of a Second Regional Plan, which will be issued within the next year or so. Where such an organization does not already exist, it should be one of the early objectives of the goals commission to stimulate the creation of one.



Since the Second World War, the Allegheny Conference on Community Development has played a strong role in bringing together the public and private organizations and interests in the Pittsburgh area. Unlike the Regional Plan Association, the Allegheny Conference has not itself attempted to develop a regional plan, although it has worked with other agencies, including a private planning agency, state, county and municipal governments and private business and voluntary organizations in developing policies and programs designed to increase the efficiency and the liveability of the Pittsburgh metropolitan region. The earlier work of the Conference has been supplemented in recent years by that of Action-Housing, Inc., in the areas of housing and community improvement in some of the less fortunate areas of the central city.

A major reason for the effectiveness of the Pittsburgh efforts is the fact that the top business leadership is resident in the area and has assumed the major responsibility for the Allegheny Conference, Action-Housing and other civic efforts aimed toward achievement of metropolitan goals.

5. In any metropolitan community with a substantial ghetto problem; that is, a problem of large numbers of non-whites who suffer poverty, unemployment and discrimination and are consequently in a condition of chronic or rising discontent, another kind of cross-section leadership organization is indicated. In a number of cities since



the 1967 summer riots, organizations variously known as urban coalitions or committees of concern have sprung up for the purpose of bringing together leadership from business, labor, civic organizations, government and the people of the disadvantaged community themselves. These organizations have sought to initiate a dialogue and develop a capacity to work together to understand and to meet the needs that neglect has brought to the point of violence born of despair. Some organizations built on this principle existed prior to the last summer riots. In the Newark area, for example, there had been a Business and Industrial Coordinating Committee composed of representatives of business, labor, and civil rights groups which had some success in expanding employment opportunities and maintaining a dialogue. The existence and work of such committees will not quickly defuse the smoldering discontent of the underprivileged. It will not itself prevent future riots. It does, however, represent the beginning of an effort at cross-cultural communication which must be carried on and expanded if American cities of tomorrow are to be safe and happy places for people of any walk of life or any positive level of aspiration.

6. Every metropolitan community needs a planned system for the communication of metropolitan intelligence and ideas. There is a tendency for the mass media --



television, radio, the large dailies -- to be blanketed by national news and programs of national or general rather than of metropolitan interest or concern. The organizations or groups in which people meet and discuss things face to face tend in the absence of a planned metropolitan agenda to concentrate either on national and world issues and concerns or on the more limited or parochial concerns of the particular organization. The metropolitan communications market needs to be stimulated and to some extent subsidized in order to meet the special needs of a metropolitan community seeking to discover and achieve goals as a partly autonomous sector of the larger state and national community. The business community is in a particularly strong position to have a constructive influence on the mass media. Metropolitan goals commissions and other metropolitan-wide planning or development organizations can perform a great service by supplying program ideas to the harried planners of programs of luncheon clubs, women's organizations, civic and fraternal groups and the like.

Adult schools and community centers have seldom been used as effectively as they might for community purposes, largely because of lack of material and of knowledgeable teachers or discussion leaders. One objective of metropolitan planning should be the establishment throughout the area of convenient centers for the coming together of people for community discussion and various social



and cultural purposes. The community center movement of the early part of this century, which grew out of a different kind of society, could well be adapted and used in building bridges of communication and understanding across the lines that divide our complex metropolitan community.

The possibilities inherent in radio, television and audio-visual presentations for communication and education on urban and community problems have hardly been touched. Experiments with the use of television in the RPA Goals for the Region project, in the so-called St. Louis Metroplex program conducted some years ago by Washington University and in a few other places are suggestive of much more that can be done to broaden and deepen community dialogue with the aid of electronics.

7. Since useful communication and sound policy depend upon the adequacy of the information input, every metropolitan community needs to develop a stronger area-wide information system. Such a system would bring together a vast amount of information generated in the normal course of events by the activities of private business as well as of those of government and non-profit organizations. Given intelligent attention to the accuracy, relevance and comparability of various kinds of information inputs, modern computer technology makes it possible to develop a tool in every metropolitan community that will provide public and private planners and decision-makers with a



more nearly common information base and provide the general public with more comprehensive and more realistic data on current conditions and future trends.

Since no metropolitan community is an island unto itself, its information system should be linked with information systems in other communities and should, of course, involve state and national, as well as regional, agencies and inputs. Such an information system would enable university and other research centers to focus more effectively and more expeditiously on serious problems of the community and enable them to help anticipate needs in much more timely fashion than has been possible heretofore. A combination of metropolitan information systems and selective research was proposed by Professor Robert Wood of MIT, now Under-Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, some years ago under the rubric "urban observatory." The encouragement and experimental development of a system of urban observatories should be an objective of metropolitan leadership.

8. Leaders of different metropolitan communities should work together for certain kinds of state and national action to facilitate the formulation and execution of meaningful and realizable community goals and policies. The fractionization of policies and programs that makes orderly and rational metropolitan policy development difficult is due in large measure to local conditions, but it is greatly compounded by the fractionization of



national and state programs that have an impact on the metropolitan community, and by the non-existence or lack of clarity of urban goals at the state and national levels.

Accordingly, metropolitan leadership should encourage and assist national and state governments in doing the following things:

- a. Clarify and strengthen state and national commitment to the improvement of the urban environment and the conditions of urban life. In short, this calls for national and state exercises in urban goal formulation with particular reference to the roles that the national and state governments must play if an increasingly urban nation is to provide an expansive and beneficent future for all its urban citizens.
- b. In accordance with this commitment, make a stronger effort to achieve consistency and coordination among national and state programs that have an effect upon a metropolitan community.
- c. Develop mechanisms that will make it easier for people in the metropolitan community to understand and make good use of national and state resources and programs in achieving community goals. A number of states have made a start in this direction through the establishment of state community or local affairs agencies.

- d. Cooperate in establishing metropolitan information systems and in supporting metropolitan communications and research efforts.
- e. Especially at the state level, enact legislation that will facilitate rather than impede metropolitan-wide decision-making and actions.
- f. Encourage and assist the formation of active voluntary councils of governments in metropolitan regions. A large number of such councils exist on paper, and a few, with farseeing leadership and competent professional staff, are demonstrating that elective officials of separate local jurisdictions can learn to talk and work together on an expanding number of common problems including the problem of adjusting some local programs to regional plans. An active council of elected officials, working with metropolitan citizen groups and backed up by a metropolitan data and research system could make a substantial contribution to metropolitan consensus.

The eight techniques described above do not, of course, exhaust the means for developing a metropolitan constituency ready and able to act in metropolitan terms on matters of common concern. Some kind of metropolitan government used to be the favorite if not the sole prescription for meeting the problems of urban communities that had outgrown their old local government frame. It is still true that a responsible area-wide government that has power to approve and carry out plans for metropolitan development and assure



adequate and fair service for citizens in all parts of the community would provide the most efficient single means for formulating and achieving metropolitan local goals. There are a few committees in the United States that have managed to develop metropolitan government reasonably adequate in area and in function to the requirements of those communities. Despite the rejection of metropolitan government proposals in many other areas, there is no reason why an increasing number of communities might not follow the lead given by Miami and Dade County in Florida and Nashville and Davidson County in Tennessee, especially in other metropolitan areas that are substantially coterminous with one or at most two counties. Even in larger, more complex communities like those in the Chicago, New York and San Francisco areas, there is reason to believe that some kind of metropolitan governmental institution responsible to the people of the whole community might ultimately be achieved. The possibility of an area-wide government should not be ruled out, therefore, by leadership seeking to develop metropolitan consensus in any area. On the other hand, the bogymen of metropolitan government should not be allowed to get in the way of early efforts at developing metropolitan communications and a meaningful metropolitan dialogue.

In the meantime, much can be achieved through the clarification of community goals and the development and execution of public and private policies in terms of those goals.

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